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What's Race Got To Do With It?: Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression in Indigenous gbMSM and gbMSM of Colour in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal

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Abstract

Background: Race is a social determinant of health seldom considered when examining mental health among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM) in Canada and gbMSM of colour may be especially vulnerable to mental health challenges as a result of their double minority position. We examined variations in anxiety and depressive symptoms by race/ethnicity among gbMSM.

Methods: From February 2017 to August 2018, gbMSM ≥ 16 years were recruited through respondent-driven sampling (RDS) in Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto as part of the Engage study. Participants completed a questionnaire which included the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scales (HADS) and were grouped based on their response to the question: "What single ethnic group or family background do you **MOST** identify with?". Univariate and multivariate logistic regression assessed ethnoracial differences in anxiety and depression symptomology with HADS-scores ≥ 8 indicating mild to severe symptoms. Estimates are not RDS-adjusted.

Results: Of 1937 gbMSM, 19% and 47% reported depressive and anxiety symptoms respectively. Compared to White gbMSM (Table 1), Latin American gbMSM were less likely to report anxious symptoms (AOR: 0.51; 95%CI: 0.33-0.79) whereas South and South-East Asian were more likely (AOR: 2.68; 95%CI: 1.55-4.63). No ethnoracial differences were observed for depressive symptoms in the multivariate analysis. Indigenous gbMSM showed no significant differences in symptoms of anxiety or depression compared to White gbMSM.

Conclusions: Preliminary findings suggest that gbMSM differentially experience mental health challenges. Additional quantitative (i.e., RDS-adjusted) and qualitative research may help clarify how intersectional factors may be contributing to ethnoracial differences observed.

Ethnicity (reference group: White)	Univariate OR (95% CI)	Multivariate AOR (95%CI)	Univariate OR (95% CI)	Multivariate AOR (95%CI)
Indigenous (n=71)	1.48 (0.90-2.44)	1.22 (0.70-2.14)	1.06 (0.57-1.98)	0.85 (0.42-1.71)
African, Caribbean, Black (n=48)	1.09 (0.61-1.97)	0.78 (0.39-1.54)	1.99 (1.04-3.80)	2.07 (0.95-4.48)
Latin American (n=142)	0.62 (0.42-0.90)	0.51 (0.33-0.79)	0.99 (0.62-1.60)	1.29 (0.75-2.20)
West Asian, Arab, North African (n=85)	1.40 (0.88-2.24)	0.99 (0.59-1.69)	1.80 (1.07-3.01)	1.58 (0.86-2.89)
South Asian, South-East Asian (n=75)	2.60 (1.55-4.36)	2.68 (1.55-4.63)	0.82 (0.43-1.59)	0.60 (0.30-1.21)
East Asian (n=78)	1.60 (1.00-2.56)	1.51 (0.91-2.51)	1.00 (0.55-1.81)	0.97 (0.51-1.86)
Other (including "other", Pacific, or mixed race/ethnicity) (n=62)	1.15 (0.66-1.99)	0.88 (0.48-1.63)	1.36 (0.72-2.58)	1.12 (0.51-2.45)

Table 1: Univariate and Multivariate analyses of mild to severe anxiety and depression scores by Race/Ethnicity (n=1937)

Note: Age, income, and sexual identity were controlled for in multivariate models